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Achieving Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development - Role of Innovative and Benchmarked KOSM Practices - A Case Study

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Achieving Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development – Role of Innovative & Benchmarked KOSM Practices – a Case Study.

S. Vaithiyanathan*

ABSTRACT :

This Case Study discusses the Innovative & Benchmarked KOSM (Information & Knowledge Organisation, Sharing and Management) Practices designed and being implemented in L&T- the Indian MNC, for Competitive Advantage, thereby Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development in the New Millennium. This paper also deals in general perspective highlighting about the Top 12 Technological Revolutions that changed the World in the recent past and about 16 Innovative and Benchmarked KOSM Best Practices introduced and sustained in the Global Organization for achieving sustainable competitive advantage, thereby world-class leadership and Growth. The organisational knowledge sharing / learning initiatives harness the collective genius / wisdom of the people, building the knowledge-based society thereby the Core Competencies, Competitive Intelligence and Maximization of Resources, to sustain and grow in this dynamic environment.

About L&T – the Indian Multinational, Knowledge Driven Organisation. Larsen & Toubro (L&T) is a US \$ 11.7 billion technology, engineering, construction and manufacturing Organisation with global operations. It is one of the top 10 professionally managed, largest and most respected companies in India's Corporate Sector. Founded in 1938, the Indian MNC is a global transformational enterprise today. Over Seven decades of a strong, customer-focused approach and the continuous quest for world-class quality have enabled it to attain and sustain leadership in all its major lines of business. ECC is the largest Division of L&T, which is India's leading engineering and construction conglomerate. Globally L&T ranks 37th among the world's Top 225 Global Contractors 2009, as per the most recent survey published in the renowned USA-based Engineering News Record (ENR).

Keywords:

Digital Library, Knowledge Sharing, Knowledge Management, Benchmarking, Core Competency, Competitive Intelligence, Human Capital, Intellectual Capital, Competitive Advantage, e-learning, Inclusive Growth, Sustainable Development.

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INTRODUCTION :

“A Nation/Organisation's inclusive growth and sustainable development is based on the world-class Continuing Education, Life-Long Learning, Research, Innovation, Competitive Intelligence & Core-Competency of its People”.

“The empires of the future are the empires of the mind”.

I wish to start with this memorable *quote from Sir. Winston Churchill in a speech at Harvard University in 1943*, he said: *“The empires of the future are the empires of the mind.”* His words, spoken in a different time and context, are still highly relevant to us. Today, it is widely recognized that the ability to create important new knowledge and apply it in the global arena is crucial for the advancement of societies, institutions and individuals.

Our goal is to organize and disseminate the world's best information and knowledge and to make it universally accessible in a seamless manner and useful for sustainable development and inclusive growth.”

We are today living in knowledge-based and knowledge-driven society. Excellence in education, research and development, innovation of technology could enable a country to survive and sustain competition and helps in building nation's Intellectual power houses. It is also for harnessing the collective genius / wisdom of the people (personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning and synergy and network).

The New Millennium - 21st Century has been acknowledged worldwide as the '**Knowledge Century**'. “Knowledge is Power”, said Sir Francis Bacon. Every nation, society, institution now finds itself operating in an increasingly competitive and globalised international environment where the information infrastructure, research and innovation systems, education and lifelong learning, and regulatory frameworks are crucial variables, launch pad for entry for achieving sustainable development and inclusive growth. In the current “Knowledge economy” continuous world-class learning is the engine to further drive the growth ahead at greater speed and cutting edge over the next decade.

Citadels of learning & Hubs of excellence:

"Learning enhances Thinking, Thinking provides knowledge, Knowledge makes you Great. Visionary Leaders having knowledge with values make the Organisation, Nation and the Society Great".

Our goal and prime task as Heads of Temples of Learning (Library & Documentation Centres (LDC)) is to organize and disseminate the world's best information and knowledge and to make it universally accessible in a seamless manner and useful for inclusive growth and sustainable development of all the stakeholders. The pivotal role that we all have today in this dynamic ever changing environment relates to the role that the *Temples of Learning* can and should play to nurture talents who will succeed in the globalised world, and who will make major contributions and benefits to society.

Nurturing the Talents of Tomorrow: Global Education & Learning for a Globalised World:

Information & Knowledge: The Prime Movers for a Knowledge-based Society (KBS). The rapid and fundamental changes which the world has experienced in recent years has been driven largely by the process of globalisation, Liberalisation and privatisation. Globalisation has resulted in an unprecedented degree of integration and interconnectedness between economics, societies, institutions and individuals, as well as rapid flows of information and knowledge, capital, goods and services and people across national boundaries. Our world is also changing rapidly, dynamically because of the increasing impact of knowledge societies and economics. These knowledge societies generate novel ideas which become new technologies, products and services, many of which are adopted across the world and have a "far-reaching and game-changing" influence in the modern society.

Think Global, Act Local:

Many Temples of Learning have responded positively to these changes and trends by pursuing strategies to become more "global". A wide range of interesting innovative and benchmarked KOSM initiatives and programmes have been launched by them across the world, and these have enriched the sphere of learning and higher education landscape and started providing world-class high-quality learning and educational systems and options for their user community.

Knowledge-Based Society (KBS):

Knowledge Society (KBS), according to one of the top management guru Dr. Peter F. Drucker (2001), defined as a society which has the following :

- Borderlessness, because knowledge travels even more effortlessly than money.
- Upward mobility, available to everyone through easily acquired formal education.
- The Potential for failure as well as success. Anyone can acquire the "means of production", i.e., the knowledge required for the job, everyone can win.

The 21st Century belongs to the Knowledge Society. Therefore, nations will build themselves into knowledge societies by understanding the dynamics of knowledge and transforming into wealth. *"Information To Inspiration: Knowledge & Vision Shapping the Future"* is the clarion call to all the star Information and Knowledge professionals of the world to energize and move forward from GOOD To GREAT by developing the best Core Competencies and thereby Competitive Intelligence for achieving world-class excellence in all their endeavours. Sir Alvin Toffler, the eminent futurologist calls it the **"Third Wave"** in the advanced human society. "The Most Successful person in Life is the person with the Best Information & Knowledge". Said Sir. Benjamin Disraeli.

Sustainable Development & Inclusive Growth - Competitiveness – the Driving Force

"A Nation/Institution/ Society is Great, not because a few people are Great, but because everyone in the Nation, Institution, Society is Great. "











- Socrates – The Greek Philosopher (469 BC).

Competitiveness is powered by Information & Knowledge. Knowledge is Empowerment. The knowledge-based society leads to "quality human resources" having the best core competencies and competitive intelligence with empowerment in all walks of human endeavours and life. Competitiveness emerges from the strength of the information and knowledge power, which is powered by technology, which in turn, is powered by Capital. The indices of world competitiveness are based on the global competitiveness report prepared by The World Economic Forum (WEF), Washington, U.S.A., The Forum has defined competitiveness as 'the ability of a national economy to achieve sustained high rates of economic growth'. Global competitiveness ranking is based on how well information and knowledge are utilised, shared and integrated in decision making process of the country, all working in unison.

Global Competitiveness Report 2011-2012:

Switzerland leads the ranking as the most competitive economy in the world, as the United States, which ranked first for several years, fell to third place and ***Singapore – the country heaven on the earth moved to 2nd Position*** from the third, moving ahead of USA.

Top 10 of the 2011–2012 rankings

1.  [Switzerland](#) 5.74 (—)
2.  [Singapore](#) 5.63 (+1)
3.  [Sweden](#) 5.61 (–1)
4.  [Finland](#) 5.47 (+3)
5.  [United States](#) 5.43 (–1)
6.  [Germany](#) 5.41 (–1)
7.  [Netherlands](#) 5.41 (+1)
8.  [Denmark](#) 5.40 (+1)
9.  [Japan](#) 5.40 (–3)
10.  [United Kingdom](#) 5.39 (+2)

The report "assesses the ability of countries to provide high levels of prosperity to their citizens. This in turn depends on how productively a country uses available resources – information & knowledge for wealth maximization. Therefore, the Global Competitiveness Index measures the set of institutions, policies, and factors that set the sustainable levels of inclusive growth and economic prosperity.

Core Competencies & Competitive Intelligence:

In today's highly competitive environment, **KOSM hold a significant competitive advantage**. The ability to harness the power of learning at all levels – individual, team, and organisational – enables them to rapidly leverage new knowledge into new products and services, new marketing strategies, and new ways of leading the learning revolution. Organisations with big brains and the ability to learn quickly will become global leaders. Organisations don't need to reinvent what others have done: Today's rallying cry is "acquire, adapt, and advance".

Core Competencies describe what the Nation / Institution is specially or uniquely capable of doing. Innovation, quality and cost leadership are the three most important factors to achieve competitive advantage and business excellence. All these depend on the quality of an organization's human resource and their competitive intelligence (Michael Porter, 1985). *Competitive Intelligence* plays an important role in Knowledge Management and the process of organizational decision making.

Why KOSM & Learning is So Important?

"Without learning, the wise become foolish; by learning, the foolish become wise."

- Confucius, the Chinese philosopher, (551 - 479 BC).

The importance of learning was first put forward by the Chinese philosopher, Confucius (551 - 479 BC). He believed that everyone should benefit from learning. *Learn as if you could never have enough of learning, as if you might miss something.*

Sir Albert Einstein, the famous scientist once wrote that "No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it; we must learn to see the world anew".

The **Ten most significant forces** that changed the organizational paradigm and business world and necessitated organization-wide learning in the 21st century are :

- ✓ Globalization and global economy competition from the world's most powerful organizations
- ✓ Doubling of knowledge every 2 to 3 years
- ✓ Increased skills shortages of people for work in the 21st century
- ✓ Increased customer influence
- ✓ New and advanced technologies
- ✓ Changing roles & workplace diversity and mobility
- ✓ Rapidly escalating change and chaos
- ✓ Spiraling need for organisations to adapt to change
- ✓ Quality of Work Life
- ✓ Emergence of Knowledge and Learning as major organizational assets

The survival of the fittest is quickly becoming the survival of the fittest to learn and apply the knowledge gained into actions.

ICT Revolution & KOSM - Global Village – Unity in Diversity & Inclusive Growth:

The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a powerful tool drives societal transformation to empower, enlighten and enrich its people. It is the continuous life-long learning committed to innovation, helps in building the core competencies and competitive intelligence of the people across globe, thereby sustainable development and inclusive growth.

As per a recent study, Internet and e-media are the most powerful technologies that are making great impact in building the Knowledge-based Society. ICT Software, hardwares tools, mobile technology and gadgets all revolutionise and play a key role in the KOSM arena of the world. Present day School Kid, whether it knows any other technological innovations or discoveries or not, it is aware of this technologies. There are millions of websites are there to promote the businesses. Every day millions of people use search engines such as Google and Yahoo to find what they are looking for. Businesses can no longer afford to ignore this outlet. Brands can be eaten by competitors. **Wikipedia entered 2012 as one of the top 10 most visited websites in the world.** It's goal – giving free knowledge to everyone. That's a great proof of success of a DL, KOSM and e-learning.

An Internet based, interconnected network of interoperable data, information and knowledge and a global registry that enables organizations around the globe to exchange standardized and synchronized innovative ideas for inclusive growth and sustainable

development. Well, such technology exists and western nations, Japan, Singapore all have been using it and reaping mega benefits.

World Knowledge Platform:

Heads of World Nations and great organisations are emphasizing the need to build and have World Knowledge Platform to facilitate free flow of information and knowledge sharing and exchange among the people – who are the prime movers and maximize all other scarce resources in wealth creation. Networking of thoughts and deeds of the 6 billions people of the globe towards a common goal of making use of Information and Knowledge is indeed the need of the hour. IKOSM is the key for creating productivity employment in an increasingly competitive market place and to continually upgrade human competencies. *This transformation will lead to larger employment generation, high productivity, high national growth, networked and transparent society, sustained and inclusive prosperity.*

Knowledge for Social Transformation:

From the dawn of the civilization, if we turn the pages of history, we will know that Information, Knowledge and Technology played the pivotal role in the societal transformation. It has been proved to be a key factor for the advancement of civilization and improving the quality of life, in the form of better health, education, infrastructure, and other social indicators.

Winning Vision & Knowledge Integration holds the key :

Knowledge Management (KM) is defined as “*management of organisational Knowledge for creating business value and generating competitive advantage*”. Knowledge is the outcome of learning. It consists of processes that facilitate generating, processing, sharing, using and storing knowledge. It is an organisation-wide effort for capturing and synthesising information from which knowledge can be created, stored and shared.

L&T – Indian MNC Knowledge Driven Organization :

L&T’s Organization Culture, Vision, Strategy, Structure and the People plays the pivotal role in *building the Knowledge-based Society. People are the prime movers. A commitment to continuous learning* constitute an integral part of the *Corporate Vision*.

The Library & Documentation Centre (LDC) is one among the vital departments of L&T - Construction Division. Its role is to enable development of all employees through Organizational Learning for Building a Knowledge-based Society - Learning Organisation and Living Company”.

LDC’s innovative & Benchmarked KOSM practices gives the human resource an extra edge. We will clearly continue to build on them.



Innovative & Benchmarked DL, KOSM practices introduced & sustained:

The Head Quarters, all the ICs, SBUs, Departments Offices, Regional Offices and about 425 Projects Job sites, user community of about 28,000 comprising 75% Engineers, spread across the country and abroad are well connected by *Enterprise Information Portal (EIP)* - *URLs:* <http://www.lntecc.com> & <http://km.lntecc.com> and *Intranet URL:* <http://172.31.19.101> for information and knowledge sharing – success stories, best practices, experiences, etc., This promotes a culture and faster transfer of best proven practices and insights and helps to learn quickly.

The DL & KOSM innovative and benchmarked best practices thrive on EIP – the frame work for integrating Information & Knowledge, People, Processes, Technology across organizational boundaries. It provides a secure unified seamless access point in the form of a web-based user interface. *Good To Great - Learning to win by sharing:* Also, contribute for Building a knowledge-based Learning Organization & Living Company - *Building a Global Organization – Connecting People and Information and Knowledge.*

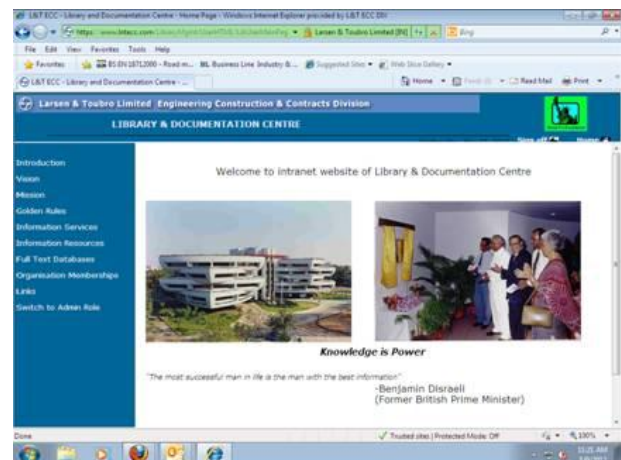


Figure 1- L&T - Construction Digital Library – Web Page

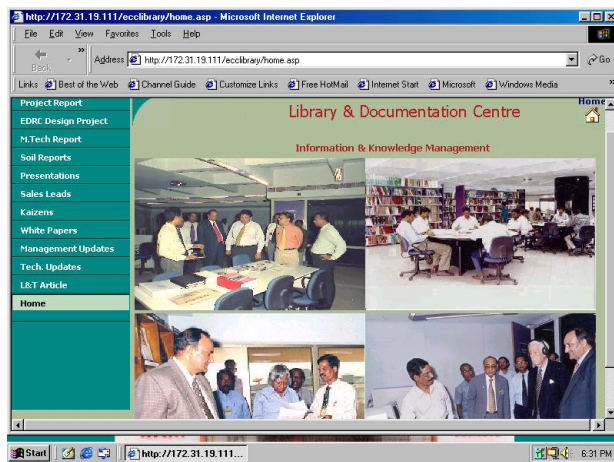


Figure 2 - L&T - Construction Knowledge Management Portal Web page

Networking & Synergy :

L&T ECC is members of about 109 national and international professional / Trade organisations, Institutions, societies and all these memberships are processed through LDC. As a result of this an effective networking is prevailing between these organizations and the Company. About 90% of these communication and information services are being received through e-format and disseminated widely through network to the concerned users on a continuous basis.

Digital Library Resources :

Digital collections form the basic building blocks for the Digital Library. They are available for seamless on-line access to the users. They are indexed, catalogued and categorized. They present an infinite yet selectable array of information in a format that is easily navigated and harnessed for competitive advantage.

- E-Databases
- E-Books
- E-Standards
- E-Journals
- E-Thesis / Project works
- E-Reports
- E-Articles (Technical / Management)
- E-Project Profiles & Design Documents
- E-Business Information Service (Sales Leads)
- E-Learning & E-Training (DVDs, CD-ROMs, CBTs, Video & Audio Tapes and Slides)

In-house Publications:

Articles that are published in In-house publications like ECC Concord – the technical magazine since 1978 (32 Years) are made available in Digital PDF format for on-line full-text access by title, author/s, keywords, subject wise of > 54000 articles of projects executed by the company.

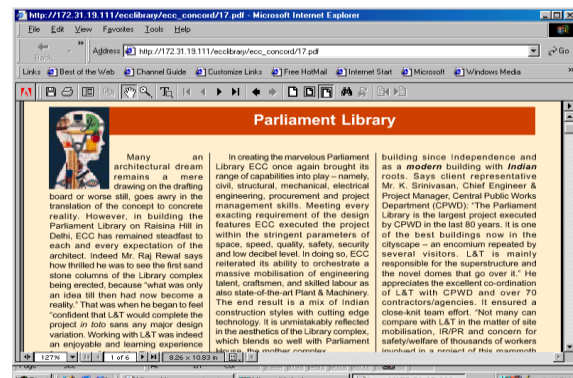


Figure 3: ECC Concord – In-house publication access page

Projects Profiles - Transforming Information & Knowledge into Intelligence:

The EDRC Projects Design Data Documents & Profiles of the completed projects serves as a useful reference material for pre-qualification purposes, when the organization bid for new projects. The profiles contain, design data, success stories, best practices, experiences, and the data pertaining to new technologies adopted, improvements made in the existing methods, cost control measures adopted, etc., are valuable tools during the execution of similar projects in future.

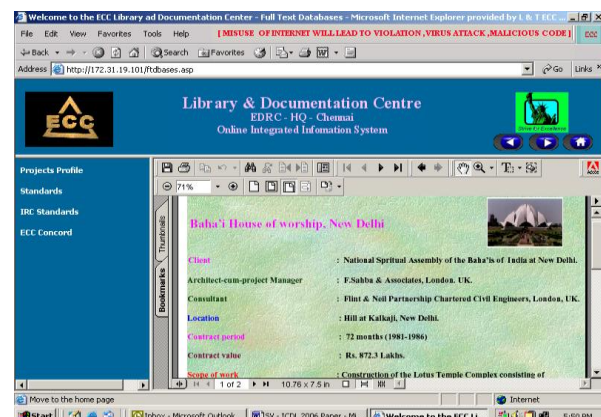


Figure 4: L&T Project Profiles access page

EDRC Design Documents:

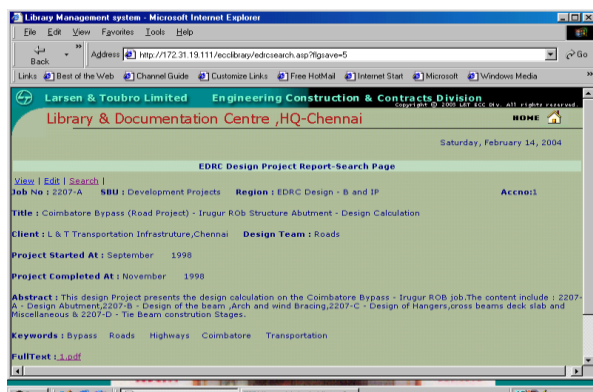


Figure 5: EDRC Design Documents access page

They are created in standard e-format with complete details captured under 16 headings and are made available for easy access and retrieval via intranet.

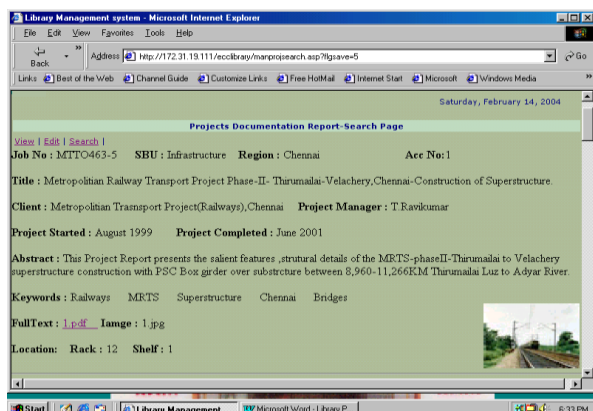


Figure 6 : Projects Repots access page

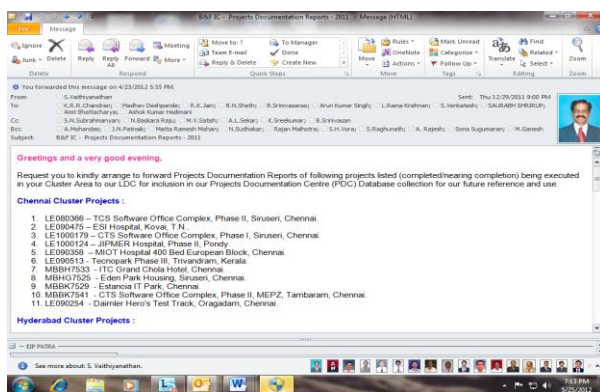


Figure 8: Projects Reports E-Mail reminder page

One-Engineer – One Journal Review : Innovate or Exit

“Individual learning transformed into team learning and organizational wide learning”.

This is a unique organizational learning initiative. LDC in association with SBUs and Department heads introduced the one-Engineer – One Journal review system. Under this a team of engineers have been identified. An engineer adopts a journal and review the issues depending on the periodicity. Selects articles of the interest to the organisation keeping the strategic planning and the technology

requirements. The bibliographic details along with abstracts and full-texts of select articles are made available for on-line access by subject wise by all the employees. About 278 Core Journals are being reviewed.

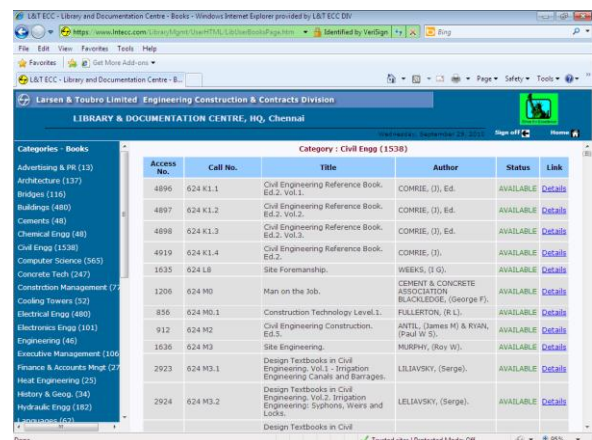


Figure 7: Books access page

Standards & Soil Investigation Reports :

Full-texts of about > 1 Lakh Technical Standards of various countries and > 560 Soil Investigation reports of various projects executed in the country and abroad by the Company are made available in the Digital PDF and organised by country wise. They serve as a valuable source to know the soil conditions of the particular place while taking up the new projects while bidding as well as during construction.



Figure 9: L&T Standards Full-Text access Page

Business Intelligence - Sales Leads as Market growth enabler

LDC is compiling and circulating information on new projects in the offing, government policies and moves, economic, political and socio trends from information resources like news papers, periodicals and internet and are digitised and disseminated through e-mail to all the SBUs and Dept. Heads and Managers Cadres of about 1000 people. This is a daily service. This value-added information service helps the top management to know the market potential in each core sector and to take strategic policy decisions accordingly in targeting the potential areas of business in tune with the changing environment. These information stored in the

Enterprise Information Portal (EIP) by core sectors wise.

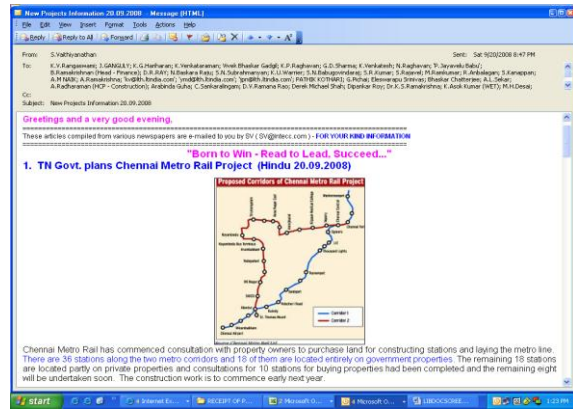


Figure 10: Business Intelligence - Sales Leads page

M.Tech., Projects Reports :

L&T – Construction in association with IIT, Chennai and IIT, Delhi conducts M.Tech., programmes, Course as part of the Build India Scholarship Programme from 1999 onwards. As part of this Academia – Industry initiative, students undertakes Live problems as their project study and pursue and submit a copy of the Project Reports to LDC. These reports bibliographic details as well as full-texts are made available for on-line access by all.

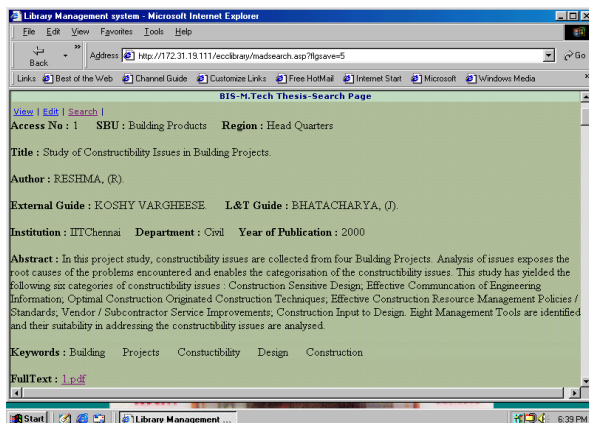


Figure 11: L&T M.Tech Reports access Page

Trend Reports : Perform or Perish

“Technology is a Nonlinear Tool for Economic Growth”.

Trend Reports on topics of vital interest to the Organisation are periodically compiled and circulated to policy makers of SBUs and top management teams. These reports serves to know the market potential, trends, govt. policies and moves in each core sectors of the economy and to take strategic policy decisions accordingly in targeting the potential areas of businesses.

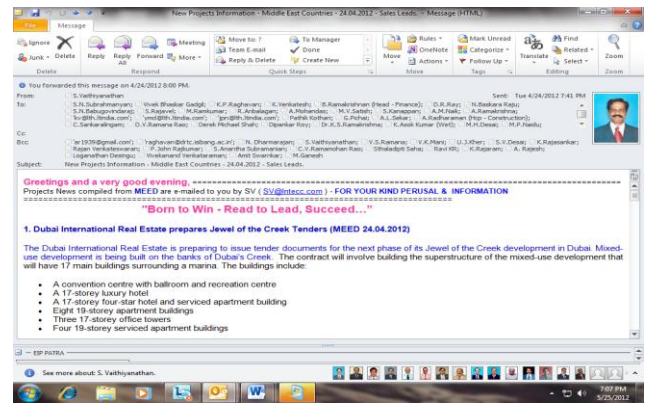


Figure 12: Trend Reports Dissemination e-mail page

Technology & Management Updates: Read To Lead, Succeed...

The Centre provides timely, qualitative, need based information service of various kinds to human resources. This helps them to keep abreast of new technology , new product, new market, etc. in their fields of activity to cope with emerging marketing competition and fast changes in environment and technological evolution, thereby to perform better in their operating areas.

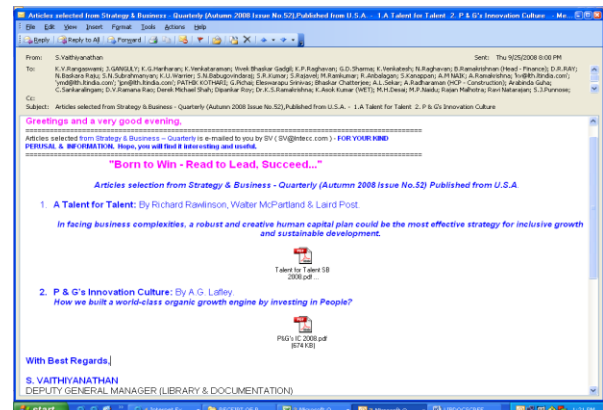
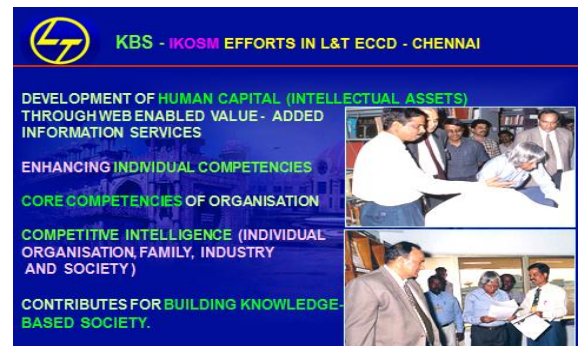


Figure13: Management Updates Dissemination page

Management Update and Technology Update Services help to keep abreast of latest developments that are taking place in these fields and for managing the continuous change.



Monthly Lecturer Series : Born To Win, hear, share, enjoy, succeed...

"Past meets the present and creates the future".

This is a holistic approach initiative covering every aspects of human life – intellectual, social, physical, emotional, organizational and spiritual well being. Eminent personalities are being invited to share their success stories, best practices, case studies, winding edge, and so on.

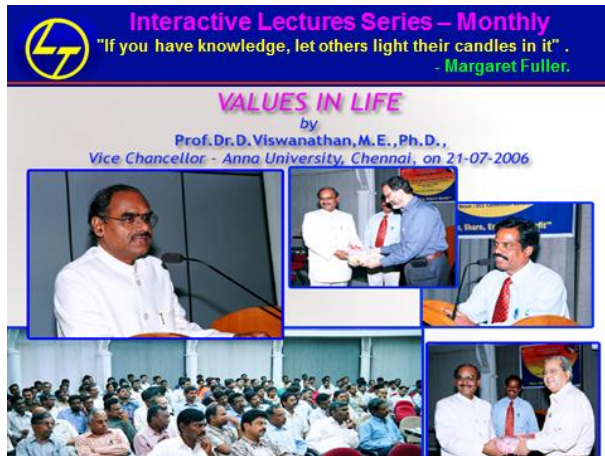


Figure 14 – Monthly lecture series

E-LEARNING & E-TRAINING: EMPOWERS EMPLOYEES

"The fundamental cure for poverty is not money but knowledge". – Sir William Arthur Lewis.

Self-learning packages are extensively used. This facility offers distinct learning advantages to the users leading to self-development and benchmarking. CD-ROMs, CBITs, Computer Softwares, Video tapes and Audio tapes on a wide a range of subjects – Leadership, Finance, Team Building, Communication, Time Management, Stress Management, Project Management, Empowerment, ISO 9000, TQM, Civil, Electrical & Mechanical Engg. forms the building blocks of this facility.

Any Time Learning (ATL) is through portal is also being explored.



Figure 15 – E-Learning & Training page

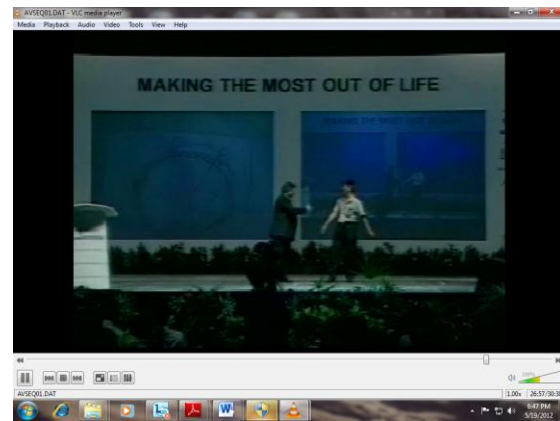


Figure 15 – ATL access page

CONCLUSION: A call to action : *"By words we learn thoughts, and by thoughts we learn Life".*

– Jean Baptiste Girard.

Mindset matters - Thoughts Create the World : A strong vision ignites the young minds. Sri Mahatma Gandhiji, the greatest leader said : "You must be the change you wish to see in the World". And with this "Can Do Attitude", Yes We Can: "Together, we will Change this Country and Change the World". "And with this "Can Do Attitude", he marched the entire Indian Nation to path of Non-violence and ultimately to Independence - is great proof of Information to Inspiration – transpired into world-class admirable leadership.

Globalisation and the rising impact of knowledge societies are changing the globe fundamentally, creating many new challenges as well as exciting opportunities in higher education and learning arena.

The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a powerful tool drives societal transformation to empower, enlighten and enrich its people. It is the continuous life-long learning committed to innovation, helps in building the core competencies and competitive intelligence of the people.

We are at a pivotal moment in time. We have a unique opportunity to transform our temples of learning. Our Temples of Learning plays the key important role in the evolving landscape, in particular by providing innovative, world-class, benchmarked KOSM initiatives that will leads to distinctive value propositions. "thought-leadership, transformative global education, leading to sustainable development and inclusive growth to all the stakeholders.

As members of the great IATUL community, I believe we can do this, that we can distinguish ourselves by becoming a leading global players in Asia and the globe.

Paraphrasing a quote from John M. Richardson, Jr.

“When it comes to the future, there are three kind of people:

those who make it happen,

those who let it happen,

and those who wonder what happened.”

And then, be one of the people who will help make the future happen. .

It reminds the saying of *Maharishi Patanchali in Yogasuthra*.

“When you are inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project, all your thoughts break their bounds. Your mind transcends limitation, your consciousness expands in every direction, and you find yourself in a new great, and wonderful world. Dormant forces, faculties, and talents come alive, and you discover yourself to be a greater person by far than you ever dreamt yourself to be”.

Let these saintly sayings enter into the minds and transforms the 6.5 billions global population to toil for creating ‘*Knowledge-based Society*’ leading to networked, transparent society, sustained and inclusive growth, prosperity, peace and blissfulness. The DL, KOSM - Information, Knowledge and Technology are prime movers for achieving this.

Righteousness

Where there is righteousness in the heart

There is beauty in the character.

When there is beauty in the character,

There is harmony in the home.

When there is harmony in the home.

There is an order in the nation.

When there is order in the nation,

*There is peace, prosperity, happiness, harmony,
blissfulness, inclusive growth and sustainable
development in the world.*

Keywords: Digital Library, Knowledge Sharing, Knowledge Management, Benchmarking, Core Competency, Competitive Advantage, Human Capital, Intellectual Capital.

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